

***96 year old Army veteran Arnold Bocksel, who suffers from service-connected injuries, applied for a grant in July 2009 so he could make home renovations;
Following intervention from Rep. Israel's office, the VA acted and approved the grant***

Syosset, NY – On Monday, Rep. Steve Israel (D – Huntington) joined Long Island World War II POW Arnold Bocksel to present him with a ceremonial check for \$63,753 from the Veterans Administration so Bocksel can renovate his home and make it accessible. Bocksel, 96, suffers from service-connected injuries.



"If you could sum up Arnold Bocksel with one word, it would be 'perseverance.' After surviving the Bataan Death March and three and a half years in a Japanese prison camp, Arnold came home a hero," said Rep. Israel. "Arnold should never have had to wait six months to find out if he could get the money he needed to make his home accessible. But I am proud to be able to join him and say that we got it done and he is finally getting the support he earned and deserves."

"We are thrilled to be part of making a difference in the everyday life of an American Hero and Veteran like Arnold Bocksel, considering his accomplishments and what he's done for our Country. It's always been part of the culture at Alure Home Improvements to make a difference and we are proud to be able to use our experience to help make Arnold's life better," said Sal Ferro, President and CEO of Alure Home Improvements, the company that will be making the renovations to Bocksel's home.

Arnold Bocksel volunteered to join the Army in 1941 and served in the Pacific theater. In 1942

he was captured and for years no one knew if he was alive. He survived three and a half years in a Japanese prison camp and the Bataan Death March. On August 17, 1945 he was released – weighing just 97 lbs. It was his mother's birthday and headlines quoted him saying, "Mom, I made it." Bocksel went on to write a book called *Rice, Men and Barbed Wire*.

Years later his service-connected injuries have taken a toll and he is in need of home renovations to make his house accessible. In July 2009, Bocksel, a 100% service-connected disabled veteran, applied for a Special Adaptive Housing Grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs so he and his family could get financial assistance to make his home renovations.

Last week, Bocksel's family contacted Rep. Israel's office for help getting a response to the grant application. Rep. Israel's office intervened and his home renovation grant application was approved a day later. The family will receive \$63,753 to assist with renovations, including a handicap accessible bathroom, a large living room/bedroom space, and adaptations to doorways and the kitchen.

Rep. Israel has secured more than \$3.4 million in back-payments for Long Island veterans. He is the only New York member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs.